Debate with Mr. Muhammad K

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Hello Mr. Sina,

I read some of the articles from your site. I e-mailed one of them to a Muslim friend of mine, who's a philosophy major, and we both came to the same conclusion... your arguments are not logically/rationally founded... that is, they don't appeal to logic but rather to emotion... to the "liberal/humanistic sympathies in western culture" as my friend would say. So far, I haven't found your arguments convincing...

Dear Mr. K,

Religion appeals to emotions therefore for a religious person it is not easy to be objective. If you think my arguments are not logically/rationally founded, may be it is because you are biased. All believers are biased. You cannot believe in something and not be biased. If you are not biased towards a doctrine you won't believe in it, rather you question it and reject part of it. Since it is not possible to accept part of a religion and reject other parts of it, especially in Islam that claims to be the perfect religion, if you are not biased, you are not a believer. Of course if what I say is not rational or logical, you should have no difficulty to demonstrate that. As a matter of fact I have issued a challenge in the first page of my site inviting anyone to disprove my arguments and if he succeeds I'll delete my site. Just denouncing my arguments is no proof; the challenge is to disprove me logically and rationally.

Let me say for the record that I am a Muslim though pretty secular minded. For example, I am a strong believer in the secular state and rule of law - at elections I consistently support the platforms of social-democratic parties. I am attracted and open to other religions as well... I have been particularly influenced by Quakerism, Unitarianism, and Native-Canadian religion.

You are either pregnant or you are not. What you tell me about yourself is not Islam. You cannot call yourself a Muslim and disregard what the Quran asks you to do. This is what the Quran teaches.

2:191, **And slay them wherever ye catch them**

48:13 And if any believe not in Allah and His Messenger, We have prepared, for those who reject Allah, a Blazing Fire!

3:85, **If anyone desires a religion other than Islam (submission to Allah), never will it be accepted of him**; and in the Hereafter He will be in the ranks of those who have lost (All spiritual good).

This is what Quarn says about other religions. You cannot have it both ways. Please be honest to yourself and define where you are standing.

Also, I want to say that I have no intention of bringing you back to Islam... that's your own choice as "there is no compulsion in religion." I merely am troubled by the flaws in your argument.

That single verse “there is no compulsion in religion” was said when Muhammad was in Mecca and weak. How he could compel people when he had no means. That was a convenient thing to say. But when he became powerful, he forgot about this verse and started revealing verses such as this one.

9:123, O ye who believe! **fight the unbelievers who gird you about, and let them find firmness in you:** and know that Allah is with those who fear Him.

According to many Islamic scholars the surah Towbah (surah nine) that is said to be the last surah revealed to Muhammad that contains many verses such as above, abrogates the “no compulsion” think in Quran. See here

Based on 3: 28 you should not even take a non-believer as a friend.

I'm just curious where in the West you have lived... it seems you have only been exposed to a middle class/university environment within the West. I'm from small-town (actually small city) Canada (a "redneck" region of Canada you might say). I don't find ALL Westerners to be that tolerant or liberal (I want to avoid over-generalizing and stereotyping though, which you do quite a bit - especially in your comments about Saudis and Westerners). I find many in the West tend to practice a sort of cultural imperialism - they think they are superior without critically examining their own system of thought. In a way Western humanistic thought is a system of thinking as is Islam...

I did not say all the Westerners are tolerant people. Here we have the KKK, the neo nazis and other nutcases. I do not believe in stereotyping. But generally speaking “most” people in the West are tolerant while finding a tolerant person among the Muslims, say for example the Saudis is rare. Said this, I also should say the West has its devils and Islam its saints. We are talking about general rule not exceptions.

I don't particularly believe many of the practices common in Islam today... but one can be (as I am) a cultural Muslim because, for better or for worse, that is the group I feel I belong with. In Israel, many Jewish nationalists don't believe in Judiasm as a religion but rather as a nationality. They consider Judaism as part of their identity but don't necessarily believe in this tenants. I was talking about this the other day with a Jewish friend of mine.

What do you mean by “cultural Muslim”? Are you talking about your ethnic background, the music you listen to, the language you speak, the cuisine you prefer, the architecture, the poetry and the calligraphy of your people? If that is what you are talking about I am a cultural Muslim too. Some how we call these things Islamic; I prefer to refer to them as Middle Eastern. I do cherish and love my culture, my heritage, my motherland and my people and their folklore. It is the religion of Muhammad that I am against, not my culture. I am against Islam because it teaches me to hate others.

Judaism is a nationality. The religion of Judaism was created to foster and protect that nationality. There have been many studies on this subject. The best one is by Richard Elliot Friedman, the author of Who Wrote the Bible. Islam on the other hand is a religion that wants to expand, conquer and dominate the entire world. Judaism represents no danger to anyone; Islam does.

Furthermore, the Quran, like the Bible and the Torah, can be interpreted to mean pretty much anything you want. I've heard arguments that paint the Quran as very liberal (ie. promoting homosexuality, women's rights, and legalized euthanasia) and as being very illiberal as you have argued. While there are phrases one can interpret as very harsh, there are also phrases one can interpret as being very liberal. One can take the Quran as being metaphorical and allegorical - which I personally think is accurate and which seems more consistent.

Quran claims to be a book of guidance in which there is no doubt and admits no error. If this book can be interpreted by anyone to suit his or her whims that book is not a book of guidance. If you consult a map you expect all the information be truthful. If it guides you sometimes and at other times it misleads you that map of no value to anyone. If Quran means something to one person and quite another thing to someone else, it fails to be a clear source of guidance to everyone. By claiming to be an infallible source of guidance Quran becomes a dangerous source of misguidance. A true book of guidance should not allow itself to interpretations but must be precise and definite. Your opinion that Quran is metaphorical is not shared by Quran and other Muslims who actually could kill you for trying to introduce bid'a (innovation).

Pierre Trudeau, a former Prime Minister of of Canada, was a devote Catholic but did not believe all the tenants of the Vatican. As a social activist in the 1950s and early 1960s he fought the stranglehold that the Catholic Church held over his home province of Quebec. As Justice Minister in the 1960s he legalized homosexuality and as Prime Minister in the 1970s abolished capital punishment. He was a strong believer in the power of rational thought.

There are many Catholics who do not believe in everything that Vatican tells them. But one cannot find many harsh teachings like “kill the unbelievers” in the New Testament. There are few misogynistic remarks in the NT but nothing like what we find in the Quran. Christianity still survives and it may survive for a few more centuries. But Islam is a different story. Islam teaches hate and advocates violence. We cannot have liberal Islam for too long. As Taslima

Nasrin points out, Islam is like a poisonous tree from which shoot out poisonous brunches of fundamentalism. You can keep cutting the branches but as long as the tree is not uprooted, these branches keep shooting out.

Just some thoughts. Also, as I said in my previous e-mail, I don't seek to convert you to Islam (frankly your religous beliefs are your business as I don't believe in imposing my views on others). Rather, I seek merely to point out the flaws in your arguments.

I would be more than happy to listen to the flaws of my arguments. So far you have only expressed your opinion and not the flaws of my argument. Why you don't do so? I have issued the challenge that should anyone refute my arguments I will delete my site not before publishing an apology. All you have to do is to disprove what I say about Muhammad and my claim that Quran is wrong.

Furthermore, I believe that you should be free to air your views - as free thought and criticism are what made the medieval Islamic empire flourish - unlike the present day where stifling of free thought has lead to the stifling nature of Islamic cutlure today.

It is true. Medieval Islamic World flourished because freethinkers like Ar Razi, Abu Ali Sina, Ibn Rushd, Al Muari, Khayyam and other great luminaries were not put to death when they expressed their disbelief in Islam and its mumbo jumbo. But see how fundamentalism came back? Look at Turkey. Ata Turk secularized Turkey, but today the fundamentalists are trying to reverse his reforms. Reza Shah of Iran 70 years ago also curtailed Islam, but 50 years later the fundamentalism destroyed that land. Keeping Islam is playing with a poisonous snake. You either kill this snake or be prepared that one day it will come out of its cage and bite you. I want to kill Islam forever. I do not agree castrating it and flirting with it. I do not see any need for it. I have rather got rid of my romanticism and I am more pragmatic. I do not trust Islam. Why should we hold unto something that does not benefit us but could be lethal?

One more thing, on my political views, which may be of relevance - I was brought up in an environment to believe in democratic socialism. However, in university I questioned these beliefs which I had earlier accepted so uncritically. I was a neo-conservative for a while. Though, after critical thinking I came back to my old socialist views but was better informed and less dogmatic. I believe that might (though I could be wrong) reflect the next stage in the spiritual development of an individual like yourself - to accept Islam but not uncritically - I found that thought prevelant among some of the testimonials on your site - Michael Muhammad Knight being one example. Many of them seem to still accept Islam but just not uncritically anymore.

All the best!

Muhammad K..

There are some who still opine Islam can be reformed. They cannot get rid of it and need to cling to it. They want to reinvent a tolerant Islam. I question why. Why we should hold unto something that is false from origin. Muhammad was a narcissist and a sick man. Why we

need to praise him? Shall we hold unto the image of Hitler but try to reform and humanize his philosophy? What is this attachment we have with this man? On one hand you are saying that what Muhammad said should not be completely relied upon, we have to incorporate democracy and freedom of thought in Islam. Which according the Muhammad is bid'a and you are an apostate. On the other hand you cannot let go of this man? Why?

The problem is that as long as people like you, who have earned their degrees, uphold Islam as the religion of God and the hodgepodge of Quran as the word of God, the fundamentalists get their confirmation that all the killings that they do by following the explicit teachings of Quran becomes justifiable. You may be a liberal person and a freethinker, but when you recognize Quran as the book of God, the less educated Muslims do not care to listen to your advice. They are not interested in your personal views about tolerance, democracy and freedom but they follow what the Quran teaches. And Quran teaches hate, bigotry, fanaticism and killing. You are responsible for the rise of fundamentalism, whether you agree with that or not.

Kind Regards

Ali Sina